तव कथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

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Highlights

• **Service is Absolute**
His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

• **Doing Sums for the Teacher**
Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada

• **The Glories of Gopi-candana Tilaka**
Vāsudeva Upaniṣad

Service is Absolute

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

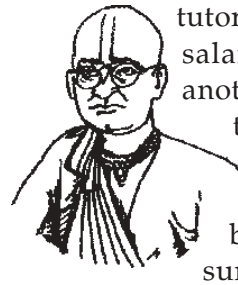
You are thinking that because you cannot take part in the translation work therefore you will contribute for its publication. This dictation from within your heart from Krishna is quite in order. For serving the Lord we require to sacrifice our life, our wealth, our intelligence, and our words. One can serve the Lord with these four possessions — if not, then with three, if not, then two, or even one, and that is sufficient to please the Supreme Personality of Godhead. I wish that you can use your best talents in business organization and utilize the result for Krishna's satisfaction. This is on the absolute platform. To make the idea more clear, if I am translating *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* and you are contributing for its publication and helping for its distribution, then there is no difference between your service and my service. On the absolute platform there is no such distinction. And service is always on the absolute platform. One has to make the best use of his talent for the service of Krishna. That is wanted. The best example is Arjuna, he utilized his talents in military science in the service of Krishna.

— Letter to Gargamuni Das, 7 June 1968.

Doing Sums for the Teacher

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur
Chapter 116 of Upākhyāne Upadeśa

Upākhyāne Upadeśa *is a collection of short stories with explanations that were commonly used by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur. Compiled by Sri Sundarananda Prabhu, a prominent disciple of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta, it was first published in 1940.*



Once a landlord appointed a tutor for his son at a monthly salary of fifteen rupees plus another fifteen rupees for the tutor's maintenance. The landlord's son was very weak in math, so the tutor began giving him many sums to do by himself. The pupil tried to insist that the tutor perform the calculations for him, but the tutor told him, "If I do it for you, then you will never learn math. I will demonstrate to you the basic methods to solve the equations, and I can assist you when you get confused. But you'll have to perform all the calculations for your own practice." The boy was very inattentive and lazy. He had little interest to learn math, but due to pressure from his parents he had to practice under the tutor.

next column ☞

One day he was loudly speaking to his friends so that his tutor could easily overhear him. "My father has engaged a worthless tutor for me on a monthly salary of fifteen rupees plus an additional fifteen rupees for his food and clothing — in all thirty rupees a month! But still I am forced to perform so many equations for him every day. I can't tolerate this any more — so much strain on me, we are spending so much money, and I still have to take the trouble of performing all of the math calculations for him! Why should we pay him any salary when in fact I myself am doing all the work?"

PURPORT

Many of us maintain a similar attitude to the lazy boy in this story. We renounce our family life and we sacrifice many things in the service of guru. Some of us collect donations and perform varieties of direct and indirect service for the satisfaction of our spiritual master, but inwardly we are thinking, "What do we gain?"

We forget that performing such math calculations or services are for our benefit and by such activity we become uplifted, not the guru.

The guru knows mathematics very well. It is only for our wellbeing that he has ordered us to perform calculations. The spiritual master is engaging us in different services for our ultimate satisfaction and welfare on the path of devotion. Those who are averse to their own benefit consider such services to be meant for the welfare of the spiritual master, for the temple complex, for the *vaiṣṇavas*, or for the Lord, and thus foolishly take little interest in them.

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The Glories of Tilaka

Vāsudeva Upaniṣad

In his purport to Śri Caitanya-caritāmṛta ādi *7.108 His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada gives a list of the 108 main Upaniṣads. The* Vāsudeva *Upaniṣad is given therein as number 56. The following excerpted verses form the bulk of that work.*

oṁ namaskṛtya bhagavān nāradaḥ sarveśvaraṁ vāsudevaṁ papraccha adhīhi bhagavann ūrdhva-puṇḍra-vidhiṁ dravya-mantra-sthānādi-sahitaṁ me brūhīti.

Om. The great sage Narada bowed down before the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Vāsudeva, and asked, "O Lord, please teach me the rules of upward-directed (*vaiṣṇava*) *tilaka*. Please tell me of the substances, mantras, places, and other things in connection with it."

taṁ hovāca bhagavān vāsudevo vaikuṇṭha-sthānād utpannaṁ mama prīti-karaṁ mad bhaktair brahmādibhir dhāritaṁ viṣṇu-candanaṁ mamāṅge pratidinam āliptaṁ gopībhiḥ prakṣālanād gopī-candana-mākhyātaṁ mad-aṅga-lepanaṁ puṇyaṁ cakra-tīrthāntaḥ sthitaṁ cakra-samāyuktaṁ pīta-varṇaṁ mukti-sādhanaṁ bhavati.

Lord Vāsudeva said, "To please Me, My devotees headed by the demigod Brahma, wear *viṣṇu-candana*, which comes from the spiritual world of Vaikuntha. It is also known as *gopī-candana* because every day the *gopīs* anoint My limbs with this *candana* and then again wash it away. This sacred yellow *candana*, which holds within it My *cakra*, and which is present at Chakra-tirtha, brings liberation to those who wear it.

atha gopī-candanaṁ namaskṛtvoddhṛtya.

"In the following prayer one praises and bows down before *gopī-candana*:

gopī-candana pāpa-ghna viṣṇu-deha-samudbhava cakrāṅkita namas tubhyaṁ dhāraṇān muktido bhava

"'O *gopī-candana*, O destroyer of sins, You have manifested from Lord Vishnu's transcendental body and are marked with His *cakra*, I offer my obeisances to you. Please bestow liberation, for I am anointed with you.'

imaṁ me gaṅge iti jalamādāya viṣṇornukam iti mardayet. ato devā avantu na ity etan mantrair viṣṇu-gāyatryā keśavādi-nāmabhir vā dhārayet.

"One should go to My Ganges, take some water, bring it to My temple, and use it to make *gopī-candana* paste. Then, reciting either the mantras that begin, *devā avantu naḥ* — 'May the Lord protect us.' or the *viṣṇu-gāyatrī*,

or My names beginning with Keshava, one should apply *gopī-candana tilaka*.

brahmacārī vānaprastho vā lalāṭa-hṛdaya-kaṇṭha-bāhū-mūleṣu vaiṣṇava-gāyatryā kṛṣṇādi-nāmabhir vā dhārayet. iti trivāramabhimantrya:

"A *brahmācarī* or *vānaprastha* should, while chanting the *viṣṇu-gāyatrī* or the holy names beginning with Krishna, apply this *tilaka* to his forehead, chest, neck, and shoulders. Three times he should chant this mantra:

śaṅkha-cakra-gadā-pāṇe dvārakā-nilayācyuta
govinda puṇḍarīkākṣa rakṣa māṁ śaraṇāgatam

"'O Lord who holds the conch shell, *cakra*, and club in Your hands, O infallible Lord who resides in Dwarka, O lotus-eyed Lord Govinda, please protect me, who have taken shelter of You.'

iti dhyātvā gṛhastho lalāṭādi-dvādaśa-sthaleṣv anāmikāṅgulyā vaiṣṇava-gāyatryā keśavādi-nāmabhir vā dhārayet.

"After meditating in this way, while chanting the *viṣṇu-gāyatrī* or the holy names beginning with Keshava, a *gṛhastha* should apply this *tilaka* with his ring finger to twelve parts of his body, beginning with his forehead.

yatis tarjanyā śiro-lalāṭa-hṛdayeṣu praṇavenaiva dhārayet.

"A *sannyāsī*, while chanting the sacred syllable *oṁ*, should apply this *tilaka* with his forefinger to his head, forehead and chest.

brahmādayas trayo mūrtayas tisro vyāhṛtayas trīṇi chandāṁsi trayo 'gnaya iti jyotiṣ mantras trayaḥ kālās tisro 'vasthās traya ātmānaḥ puṇḍrā-traya ūrdhvā a-kāra u-kāro ma-kāra ete praṇava-mayordhva-puṇḍrās tad ātmā sad etad om iti.

"As there are three deities (Brahma, Vishnu and Siva), three *vyāhṛtis* (*bhūḥ, bhuvaḥ* and *svaḥ*), three metres in the Vedic hymns, three sacred fires, three times three states of being, three *ātmās*, and three letters (*a*, *u*, and *ṁ*, in the sacred syllable *oṁ*), so *vaiṣṇava tilaka* has three parts, which correspond to the letters in the sacred *oṁ*.

tān ekadhā samabhavat. ūrdhvam unnamayata ity oṁ-kārādhikārī.

"A person who chants the sacred syllable *oṁ* goes upward (*ūrdhva*). That is why *vaiṣṇava tilaka* is called *'ūrdhva-puṇḍra'*.

tasmād ūrdhva-puṇḍraṁ dhārayet. parama-haṁso lalāṭe praṇavenaikam ūrdhva-puṇḍraṁ vā dhārayet.

"A *paramahaṁsa* should say the sacred syllable *oṁ* and place *vaiṣṇava tilaka* on his forehead.

tattva-pradīpa-prakāśaṁ svātmānaṁ paśyan yogī mat sāyujyam avāpnoti.

"When he sees the Supersoul in his heart illumined with the lamp of truth, the yogi attains the liberation of meeting Me.

athavā nyasta-hṛdaya-puṇḍra-madhye vā hṛdaya-kamala-madhye vā.

"Or the yogi may surrender his heart to the Lord in the *tilaka* mark on his chest or to the Lord in the lotus of his heart.

tasya madhye vahni-śikhā aṇīyordhvā vyavasthitā nīlatoyadamadhyasthādvidyullekheva bhāsvarā nīvāraśūkavattanvī paramātmā vyavasthita iti

"In the heart is a flame reaching upwards, a flame like a lightning flash from a dark cloud, or like a slender rice plant. The Supersoul stays in that flame.

ataḥ puṇḍra-sthaṁ hṛdaya-puṇḍarīkeṣu tam abhyaset kramād evaṁ svātmānaṁ bhāvayen māṁ paraṁ harim

"In the lotus flower of the heart one should search for the Supreme Lord, who is present as the *tilaka* mark. Gradually one should become rapt in meditation on Me, Lord Hari, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is present as the Supersoul.

ekāgra-manasā yo māṁ dhyāyate harim avyayam
hṛt paṅkaje ca svātmānaṁ sa mukto nātra saṁśayaḥ

"He becomes liberated who, with single-pointed concentration, meditates on Me, Lord Hari, the eternal Supersoul who stays in the lotus flower of the heart. Of this there is no doubt.

mad rūpam advayaṁ brahma ādi-madhyānta-varjitam
sva-prabhaṁ sac-cid-ānandaṁ bhaktyā jānāti cāvyayam

"By engaging in My devotional service one is able to understand My transcendental form, which is spiritual, eternal, self-manifest, filled with knowledge and bliss, and beyond the touch of the material world of dualities.

eko viṣṇur anekeṣu jaṅgama-sthāvareṣu ca
anusyuto vasaty ātmā bhūteṣv aham avasthitaḥ

"I am Lord Vishnu, the one Supersoul who stays in the hearts of the many moving and unmoving creatures.

tailaṁ tileṣu kāṣṭheṣu vahniḥ kṣīre ghṛtaṁ yathā
gandhaḥ puṣpeṣu bhūteṣu tathātmāvasthito hy aham

"As oil stays in sesame seeds, as fire stays in wood, as butter stays in milk, and as fragrance stays in flowers, so I, the Supersoul, stay in the hearts of all living creatures.

brahma-randhre bhruvor madhye hṛdaye cid raviṁ harim
gopī-candanam ālipya tatra dhyātvāpnuyāt param

"By anointing one's body with *gopī-candana tilaka* and by meditating on the Supreme Lord, Hari, splendid like a transcendental sun in the *brahma-randhra cakra* at the top of the head, heart, and between the eyebrows, one attains the Lord in His supreme abode.

ūrdhva-daṇḍordhva-retāś ca ūrdhva-puṇḍrordhva-yogavān
ūrdhvaṁ padam avāpnoti yatir ūrdhva-catuṣkavān

"His *sannyāsa daṇḍa* raised, his semen flowing upwards, His *vaiṣṇava tilaka* vertical, and his practice of yoga elevated, the *sannyāsī*, ascending in these four ways, goes to the highest spiritual abode.

ity etan niścitaṁ jñānaṁ mad bhaktyā sidhyati svayam
nityam ekāgra-bhaktiḥ syād gopī-candana-dhāraṇāt

"The final conclusion is that by serving Me with devotion one attains the supreme perfection. Wearing *gopī-candana tilaka*, with single pointed concentration one should always engage in My devotional service.

brāhmāṇānāṁ tu sarveṣāṁ vaidikānām anuttamam
gopī-candana-vāribhyām ūrdhva-puṇḍraṁ vidhīyate

"Of all *brahmāṇas* and followers of the Vedas, he is best who wears *vaiṣṇava tilaka* of *gopī-candana* mixed with water.

yo gopī-candanābhāve tulasī-mūla-mṛttikām
mumukṣur dhārayen nityam aparokṣātma-siddhaye

"If *gopī-candana* is not available one may use the earth from the roots of the *tulasī* plant. In order to attain the spiritual goal that cannot be seen by materialistic men, a person who yearns for liberation should wear *vaiṣṇava tilaka* every day.

evaṁ vidhinā gopī-candanaṁ ca dhārayet.

"In this way one should apply *vaiṣṇava tilaka* with *gopī-candana.*

yas tv adhīte vā sa sarva-pātakebhyaḥ pūto bhavati. pāpa-buddhis tasya na jāyate. sa sarveṣu tīrtheṣu snāto bhavati. sa sarvair yajñair yājito bhavati. sa sarvair devaiḥ pūjyo bhavati. śrīman nārāyaṇe mayy acañcalā bhaktiś ca bhavati. sa samyag jñānaṁ ca labdhvā viṣṇu-sāyujyam avāpnoti. na ca punar āvartate na ca punar āvartate. ity āha bhagavān vāsudevaḥ.

"A person who studies this *Upaniṣad* becomes purified of all sins. Sinful thoughts do not arise in his mind. He attains the results of bathing in all sacred rivers and lakes. He attains the results of performing all *yajñas*. He is to be worshipped by all the demigods. He attains unwavering devotion to Me, Lord Narayan, the husband of the goddess of fortune. When his spiritual knowledge is perfect he attains the liberation of meeting Lord Vishnu. He does not return to the world of birth and death."

Thus spoke Lord Vāsudeva, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

— Unknown translator. Sanskrit from http://sanskrit.gde.to

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Email: katha@gopaljiu.org

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